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Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council: Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic

Twenty-sixth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/68/327/Add.9), which contains the proposed resource requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 for the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with responses received in writing on 3 March 2014.

2. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/247, approved the total amount of $596,826,600 for the budgets of the 36 special political missions authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council and also approved a charge totalling $596,826,600 net against the provision for special political missions requested in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

II. Proposed resource requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

3. By its resolution 2127 (2013) the Security Council established a Panel of Experts consisting of a group of up to five experts to monitor an arms embargo

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pertaining to the Central African Republic. The mandate of the Panel was further extended to 28 January 2015 by the Council in its resolution 2134 (2014), in which the Council adopted additional targeted measures. During its consideration of the proposed resource requirements for the Panel, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Panel was appointed by the Secretary-General on 13 February 2014 (see S/2014/98); it comprised experts in the following five fields: arms, armed groups and humanitarian, regional and natural resources/finance issues.

4. The Advisory Committee was informed that pending the consideration of the budget proposal by the General Assembly, the initial requirements of the Panel of Experts were being met through a commitment authority of the Secretary-General in the amount of $846,500 under the provisions of Assembly resolution 68/249 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2014-2015. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the timely submission of the proposed resource requirements for the Panel of Experts, immediately following the mandates emanating from Security Council resolutions 2127 (2013) and 2134 (2014).**

5. The Secretary-General further indicates that in carrying out its mandate, in addition to seeking the cooperation and assistance of Member States, the Panel of Experts is expected to seek the cooperation and assistance of regional and economic organizations, as well as relevant sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (A/68/327/Add.9, para. 2). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Panel of Experts will benefit from the cooperation and assistance of the organizations, teams, groups and panels as indicated.**

6. Planning assumptions for the proposed resource requirements for the Panel of Experts are provided in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report. The Secretary-General indicates that the objective of the Panel is to ensure the full implementation of the sanctions measures contained in Security Council resolutions 2127 (2013) and 2134 (2014) pertaining to the Central African Republic. The related expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement, performance measures and outputs are provided in paragraph 5 of the report. The outputs consist of reports to the Security Council; briefings, progress reports and investigation reports to the Committee; and communications from and investigations by the Panel.

7. The total proposed resource requirements for the Panel of Experts for 2014 amount to $1,476,100 (net of staff assessment). This consists of the cost for two positions (1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)) ($183,700); fees ($500,000) and official travel ($629,800) of the five members of the Panel; official travel of staff ($40,300); and other operational and logistical support requirements ($122,300). During its consideration of the proposed resource requirements for the Panel, the Advisory Committee was informed that, consistent with the support provided to all other home-based panels, one Political Affairs Officer and one General Service (Other level) position had been requested to provide substantive advice and support to the experts.

8 Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the estimated requirements for travel of staff were mainly related to providing support to the experts, and the estimated requirements for travel of experts were related to the mandated midterm and final reports, as well as the need for consultations and meetings with government officials of the concerned countries. The Committee was further informed that, where possible, logistical and administrative support for the Panel of Experts was requested from United Nations offices or missions. Such

support was provided free of charge when there was no additional cost to the performing office, and charged to the Panel when additional costs accrued. **In this context, the Committee reiterates the importance of establishing estimates of the actual overall costs related to such activities. The Committee trusts that future similar proposals for resource requirements will contain a more precise estimate of the overall anticipated costs and that the corresponding resources will be reflected in the respective office's or mission's budgets.**

9. The Advisory Committee recalls being informed of the efforts made by the Secretary-General for improving efficiency under cluster II of the special political missions, which include: (a) maximizing alternative methods of communication, especially videoconferencing and (b) reviewing and rationalizing costs related to communication by providing guidance to all home-based panels on ways to keep costs down without having an impact on effectiveness (see A/68/7/Add.10, para. 93). **The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will expand the implementation of such efficiency measures to other similar cases, when feasible.**

10. The mandate of the Panel of Experts requires the experts, inter alia, to assist the Committee established by the Security Council in its resolution 2127 (2013) in refining and updating information on the list of individuals violating measures imposed by paragraph 54 of resolution 2127 (2013), including through the provision of biometric information. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the use of biometric information in the area of the sanctions regime was at an early stage, and the Secretariat would continue to assess the technical requirements for the provision of such information.

III. Recommendation

11. **Taking into account its comments and observations in the preceding paragraphs, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the budget in the amount of $1,476,100 (net of staff assessment) for the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic for the period up to December 2014;**

(b) **Approve a charge totalling $1,476,100 (net of staff assessment) against the provision for special political missions approved under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.**